

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

Statement on the 20th Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide
July 10, 2015

On July 11, we join people of all faiths and nationalities in commemorating the Srebrenica genocide. We mourn the loss of its more than 8,000 victims, and we honor the memory of those only now being laid to rest and all those still missing.

Twenty years ago, Srebrenica was overrun. In the genocide that followed, brothers, sons, husbands, and fathers were torn from their families. They were savagely murdered in the largest massacre in Europe in a half-century. We can offer no solace that fully addresses the pain borne by the victims' families. But we must look back at Srebrenica with clear eyes, commemorate the tragedy, and learn from it.

Only by fully acknowledging the past can we achieve a future of true and lasting reconciliation. Only by holding the perpetrators of the genocide to account can we offer some measure of justice to help heal their loved ones. And only by calling evil by its name can we find the strength to overcome it.

As we approach the 20th anniversary of the Dayton Accords, we recall that the tragedy of Srebrenica helped mobilize the international community to halt the slaughter of civilians and to finally end the war. Today the United States stands committed to joining with our Balkan partners to continue helping heal the wounds of the past. May we together honor the victims of Srebrenica and their loved ones by building a future in which all the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans live together in peace.

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